

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK
RARE BIRD RECORDS
DECEMBER, 2008 - FEBRUARY, 2009

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Least grebe	1	02/16	RGV-Nature Trail	Barbara Tobias	acc.
Double-crested Cormorant	1	02/03	RGV-Nature Trail	John/Joanne Biddick	rare
American bittern	1	01/26	RGV-Nature Trail	J&J Biddick	rare
Black-crowned Night-heron	1im	02/18	RGV-Nature Trail	J&J Biddick	rare
Harris's hawk	3	12/07	SEC road mp 5	MFlippo, Deb Hurst	rare
	1	01/14	Oak Creek	Steve & Tina Ehrman	rare
Virginia rail	1	01/06	RGV-campground	Mark Flippo	rare
	1	01/26	new Gambusia pond	Joanne Biddick	rare
	1	02/02-03	RGV-campground	J&J Biddick	rare
Burrowing owl	1	12/29	River Road East	CBC	rare
Costa's Hummingbird*	1m	01/26-02/08	Terlingua	Mark Flippo	acc.
*Texas Review Species: Report to TBRC:Lockwood					
Rufous hummingbird	1f	12/17-1/20	Chisos Basin	Deborah Hurst	acc.
Green kingfisher	1f	01/26	RGV-Nature Trail	J&J Biddick	rare
Gray flycatcher	1	12/07	Sam Nail Ranch	MFlippo, D. Hurst	rare
	1	12/29	RGV-campground	CBC	rare
	1	02/03	RGV-campground	J&J Biddick	rare
	1	02/10	RGV-group camp	J&J Biddick Deborah Hurst	rare
Dusky flycatcher	1	01/05	old Gambusia pond	Mark Flippo	spo.
	1	02/07	Window Trail	J&J Biddick Jim & Kathy Bearden	spo.
Plumbeous vireo	1	12/28	Chisos Basin	CBC	rare
Cassin's vireo	2	12/29	RGV-campground	Gordie King	rare
	1	01/23	RGV-campground	J&J Biddick	rare
Western scrub-jay	2	12/28	Chisos Mountains	CBC	spo.
Pinyon jay	3	02/25	Chisos Basin	Lynn Regelin	?win

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Brown creeper	1	12/07	Cottonwood Camp.	Mark Flippo	spo.
	1	01/28	RGV-Daniels Rch.	Mark Flippo	spo.
Carolina Wren	2	12/07	Terlingua Abajo	MFlippo, DHurst	rare
	1	12/29	RGV-campground	CBC	rare
	1	01/05	Old Gambusia pond	Mark Flippo	rare
Winter Wren	1	12/29	RGV-campground	CBC	rare
	1	01/05	RGV- campground	Mark Flippo	rare
Golden-crowned Kinglet	2	12/29	RGV-camground	CBC	spo.
Western Bluebird	6m,f	12/11-21	Chisos Basin	Deborah Hurst	rare
	4m,f	12/29	RGV-campground	Gordie King	rare
	7m,f	01/20	Pinnacles Trail	S&T Ehrman	rare
Mountain bluebird	25-30	12/15	River Road East	Jan Allen	spo.
	1m	01/18	Glenn Springs Rd	Rob & Angie Dean	spo.
Sage thrasher	1	12/28	Sam Nail Ranch	CBC	spo.
	1	01/29	Dugout Wells	Stan Vasilianskas	spo.
	1	01/31	Dugout Wells	Ron Rathke	spo.
Nashville warbler	2	12/29	RGV-campground	Gordie King	acc.
Black-throated Gray warbler	1	12/29	RGV-Daniels Rch.	Deborah Hurst	rare
	1	12/29	RGV-amphitheater	Gordie King	rare
	1	01/23	RGV-campground	J&J Biddick	rare
Black & White Warbler	1	12/07	Cottonwood Camp.	MFlippo/DHurst	acc.
	1f	02/10	RGV Campground	Deborah Hurst	acc.
Hooded warbler	1m	12/10	Cottownwood Camp.	Thomas Kihn	acc.
Field sparrow	9	12/29	River Road East	CBC	spo.
Blue grosbeak	1f	12/29	RGV-Daniels Rch.	MFlippo,Ken Stinnet	acc.
	1f	02/23	Sam Nail Ranch	Deborah Hurst	early
Varied bunting	1f	01/17	Terlingua Creek	Mark Flippo	rare
Baltimore oriole	1m	01/28	RGV-Daniels Rch.	Mark Flippo	acc.

Attached is a list of observations reported by visitors and staff for the period December, 2007 - February, 2008. I've compiled observations for species which are listed as **Sporadic, Rare, Accidental, Hypothetical** or **Not included** (?) on the park's checklist. A "?win" indicates a species which is documented for the park but not in the winter season.

Winter Season: General Weather Patterns

For the second year in a row the Big Bend region experienced a very dry and relatively warm winter season. Very few hard cold fronts passed through, with temperatures seldom dropping below freezing, and bringing only drying winds. December was the only month that saw any kind of precipitation, with January and February bone dry. As expected, extreme fire danger conditions exist over the whole of the Trans-Pecos region. A comparison of current period (December - February) rainfall with the same time frame in 2008 (+ or -) reveals the drought conditions.

<u>Station</u>	<u>Dec-Feb Precip</u>	<u>Change from '08</u>	<u>Jan-Feb 09 precip</u>
Panther Junction	0.18"	-0.12"	0.00"
Chisos Basin	0.17"	-0.48"	0.02"
Rio Grande Village	0.26"	+0.18"	0.00"
Castolon	0.10"	-0.09"	0.00"
Persimmon Gap	0.01"	-0.45"	0.00"

Winter Season: The Birds

In spite of dry conditions and generally poor condition of food crops, the annual Christmas counts were productive this season, perhaps as a result of the mild temperatures and hard winter conditions further north. The count at Rio Grande Village (12/29) ended with a record number of species (94) and total individuals (2683), while the Chisos circle count (12/28) produced very respectable numbers (63 species, 1515 total individuals). Highlights of the counts included a nice diversity of unusual vireos (plumbeous and Cassin's) and warblers (Nashville and Black-throated Gray, as well as an adult female blue grosbeak.

Review species reports were lacking in the park this season, but an adult male Costa's hummingbird in Terlingua was a nice change of pace, and may be the same individual reported in the same location last fall (TBRC 2008-90: accepted 12/08) when it was in sub-adult plumage. There was an intriguing report from early February of two northern saw-whet owls in the Boot Canyon, but the identification was tentative based on call only and lacked additional documentation.

Of note this winter season was the number of normally sporadically occurring species. Both mountain and western bluebirds were present in good numbers along with the expected eastern bluebirds. Pine siskins were very numerous in mixed flocks with lesser goldfinch, and one observer reported a single flock of over 100 siskins in the Marufo Vega area of the Dead Horse Mountains. The Christmas Counts turned up two western scrub-jays, two golden-crowned kinglets, and nine field sparrows.

Other highlights include a first park winter record for pinyon jays, and the return of an adult male Baltimore oriole to the Rio Grande Village area for the second winter in a row.